

Appl. No.: 09/870,258
Amdt. dated May 7, 2004
Reply to final Office action of April 6, 2004

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Receipt of the final Office action dated April 6, 2004 is acknowledged. In that action the Examiner: (1) allowed claims 27 and 28; (2) objected to claims 13-18; (3) rejected claims 12-23 as allegedly indefinite; (4) rejected claims 1-12, 19-23 and 29-37 as allegedly anticipated by *Lin* (U.S. Patent No. 6,154,798); and (5) made the action final.

With this response, Applicants amend claims 1, 4, 6, 8, 11, 12, 13, 16, 27, 29 and 35. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of the pending claims.

I. EXAMINER INTERVIEW

On May 3, 2004, Applicants, by and through the undersigned attorney, held a telephonic interview with the Examiner. The Examiner and the undersigned discussed a previously delivered document titled "Examiner Interview Discussion Material" containing a series of proposed claim amendments. The particular claims discussed were 1, 12, 27 and 29. The related art *Lin* reference was discussed. No agreements were reached.

II. AMENDMENTS TO CLAIMS 27, 29 AND 35

With this response, Applicants amend claim 27 by changing the "reading at least one of a read only memory (ROM) date and a product code" terminology to "reading a read only memory (ROM) date or a product code" to ensure that only one of the recited parameters is required to infringe. Likewise for claim 29, Applicants change the terminology "receiving a vote from the docking station being one of a vote to couple...and a vote not to couple" terminology to be "receiving a vote from the docking station being a vote to couple...or a vote not to couple" to ensure that only one of the parameters is required to infringe. (See *Superguide Corp. v. Directv Enter., Inc.* ____ F.3d ____ (Fed.Cir. 2004) (Case ID 02-1561, -1562, -1594; decided February 12, 2004)). This is not a narrowing amendment which would give rise to *Festo*-type inquiries.

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III. SECTION 112 REJECTIONS

Applicants have amended the "about software" terminology in claims 12, 13 and 16 to read "about software executed" to address the Examiner's Section 112 concerns.

IV. SECTION 102 REJECTIONS

A. Claim 1

Claim 1 recites, "wherein the notebook computer determines whether the notebook computer expansion bus should be coupled to the docking station expansion bus by communicating across the communication pathway, and *wherein the docking station determines whether the docking station expansion bus should be coupled to the notebook computer expansion bus by communication across the communication pathway...*"

Applicants respectfully submit the *Lin* does not teach or fairly suggest that the docking station determines whether the docking station expansion bus should be coupled to the notebook computer.

Based on the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1, and all claims which depend from claim 1 (claims 2-11), should be allowed.

B. Claim 12

Claim 12 is a method claim that recites, "determining by the docking station whether the notebook computer and the docking station are sufficiently compatible to couple their expansion buses based on the information; and if both the notebook computer and the docking station agree to at least partial compatibility, electrically coupling a secondary expansion bus of the notebook computer to a bus bridge in the docking station".

Applicants respectfully submit the *Lin* does not teach or fairly suggest the limitations of claim 12. In particular, *Lin* fails to teach or fairly suggest that the docking station could or should have determine whether to couple the secondary expansion bus of the notebook computer to the expansion bus of the docking station.

Based on the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 12 should be allowed.

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C. Claim 29

Claim 29 is a method that recites, "receiving a vote from the docking station being a **vote to couple a secondary expansion bus** of the notebook computer to the docking station or a **vote not to couple the secondary expansion bus** of the notebook computer to the docking station; determining the compatibility of the notebook computer based on the transferred information; and if the notebook computer is compatible with the docking station and the docking station votes to couple, coupling the secondary expansion bus of the notebook computer to the docking station."

Applicants respectfully submit that *Lin* fails to teach or fairly suggest all the limitations of claim 29. In particular, *Lin* fails to teach or fairly suggest that the docking station could or should have a vote in determining whether to couple the secondary expansion bus of the notebook computer to the expansion bus of the docking station.

Based on the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 29, and all claims which depend from claim 29 (claims 30-34), should be allowed.

D. Claim 35

Claim 35 is directed to a method that recites, "**sending a message from the docking station to the notebook computer** indicating one of the **docking station's approval or disapproval** of further electrically coupling the docking station to the notebook computer."

Applicants respectfully submit that *Lin* fails to fairly teach or suggest the limitations of claim 35. In particular, *Lin* fails to teach or fairly suggest that the docking station could or should have be able to approve or disapprove further electrically coupling of the docking station to the notebook computer.

Based on the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 35, as well as all claims which depend from claim 35 (claims 36 and 37), should be allowed.

V. ALLOWED AND OBJECTED-TO CLAIMS

Applicants appreciate allowance of claims 27 and 28. Applicants respectfully submit that th amendments presented to claim 27, noted above, do

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not affected the allowability of these claims. Finally, Applicants amend claims 13 and 16 to be in independent form, including the limitations of their base claim 12 and the amendments to address the Section 112 rejections. Thus, claims 13-18 should be in a condition for allowance.

VI. CONCLUSION

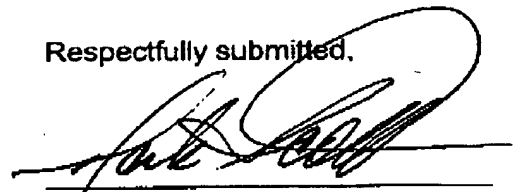
Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of the pending claims. If the Examiner feels that a telephone conference would expedite the resolution of this case, he is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned.

In the course of the foregoing discussions, Applicants may have at times referred to claim limitations in shorthand fashion, or may have focused on a particular claim element. This discussion should not be interpreted to mean that the other limitations can be ignored or dismissed. The claims must be viewed as a whole, and each limitation of the claims must be considered when determining the patentability of the claims. Moreover, it should be understood that there may be other distinctions between the claims and the prior art which have yet to be raised, but which may be raised in the future.

If any fees or time extensions are inadvertently omitted or if any fees have been overpaid, please appropriately charge or credit those fees to Hewlett-Packard Company Deposit Account Number 08-2025 and enter any time extension(s) necessary to prevent this case from being abandoned.

Applicants respectfully request that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Respectfully submitted,



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